

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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O R 091057Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8409

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL ASMARA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 3917

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D COPY (FOR TEXT: PARA #1 LINE 1 DATE APRIL 8 VICE

APRIL 11;

PARA #5 LINE 8 WORD BEFORE CONSUL

VICE)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS CASC ET

SUBJECT: TENNECO FIVE

REF: ASMARA 232 AND 235

1. I CALLED ON FONMIN DR. MINASSIE MORNING APRIL 8 TO INFORM HIM OF ELF MESSAGE OF 30 MARCH, TO EXPRESS DISMAY THAT IEG AUTHORITIES MIN ERITREA HAD DELAYED THREE DAYS BEFORE PASSING SUBSTANCE OF MESSAGE TO TENNECO, AND TO INQUIRE REGARDING GOVERNMENT'S PLANS CONCERNING A RESPONSE TO ELF MESSAGE. HE RESPONDED SYMPATHETICALLY BUT SAID HE HAD NO INFORMATION ON SUBJECT AND THAT I SHOULD TALK WITH MINISTER OF INTERIOR OR SECURITY CHIEF SOLOMON KADIR, BOTH OF WHOM HE SAID HE WOULD CALL ON SUBJECT.

2. I SAW COLONEL SOLOMON THIS MORNING. HE HAD NOT RECEIVED ELF MESSAGE AND DID NOT KNOW WHETHER GOVERNOR GENERAL OF ERITREA HAD BROUGHT MATTER OT ATTENTION OF EMPEROR OR PRIME MINISTER. COLONEL SOLOMON SUGGESTED THAT A COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM GOVERNOR GENERAL'S
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OFFICE, THE POLICE, THE 2ND DIVISION, HIS SECURITY

DIVISION, THE AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL AND TENNECO BE FORMED IN ASMARA TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNOR GENERAL, WHO COULD THEN TAKE UP WITH IEG IN ADDIS ISSUE OF WHETHER AND HOW TO NEGOTIATE WITH TENNECO CAPTORS. I TOLD COLONEL SOLOMON THAT FORMATION OF SUCH A COMMITTEE IN ASMARA APPEARED DESIRABLE BUT THAT I THOUGHT IEG IN ADDIS SHLD IMMEDIATELY FACE UP TO CENTRAL ISSUE OF INDICATING TO ELF ITS WILLINGNESS TALK TO THEM ON SUBJECT. IN THIS CONTEXT I EMPHASIZED MY CONCERN THAT SO MUCH TIME HAS ELAPSED SINCE TENNECO CAPTORS SENT THEIR MESSAGE. COLONEL SOLOMON OBSERVED THAT ISSUE OF WHETHER IEG CAN NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH TENNECO CAPTORS IS VERY COMPLICATED AND WILL PROBABLY REQUIRE CABINET DECISION, BUT PROMISED TO CONTACT GOVERNOR GENERAL AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR IMMEDIATELY WITH A VIEW TO EXPEDITING SUCH DECISION. HE UNDERTOOK TO NOTIFY ME THIS AFTERNOON OF RESULTS HIS EFFORTS.

3. I WILL ENDEAVOR REACH BOTH FONMIN AND MININTERIOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, TO EMPHASIZE NEED FOR PROMPT ACTION. CANADIAN AMBASSADOR IS ALSO SEEKING MEETING WITH MININTERIOR.

4. COLONEL SOLOMON SEEMED TO THINK HIS GOVERNMENT MIGHT WISH TO AVOID DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ELF AND INSTEAD LET ABOVE-MENTIONED COMMITTEE BE NEGOTIATING PARTNER OF INSURGENTS. HE WAS CONCERNED THAT DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT ENHANCE PRESTIGE AND STATUS OF ELF.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: I FEEL STRONGLY THAT US INTERESTS BEST SERVED IF IEG CONDUCTS THESE NEGOTIATIONS. I INTEND SO TO URGE IN MY MEETINGS WITH FONMIN AND MININTERIOR. HOWEVER, IF COL. SOLOMON'S IDEA OF A NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE IS BROUGHT UP BY ETHIOPIANS AT POLICY LEVEL, WOULD BE HELPFUL TO ME HAVE DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE IN HAND ON THIS ISSUE. SPECIFICALLY, I WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING WHETHER USG WOULD BE WILLING HAVE USG OFFICIAL (VICE CONSUL ROBERT PERRY) BE NOTIFIED TO ELF AS ONE MEMBER OF GROUP WHICH WILL CONDUCT NEGOTIATIONS WITH IT. PLEASE ADVISE. WYMAN

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